



Proposed Agreement for Long-Term Conjunctive Management for the Eastern Snake River Basin



Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer Working Group
Expanded Natural Resources Interim Committee

August 2, 2004

IGWA Idaho Ground Water Appropriators

Key Underlying Premises

- Complex problem with many root causes
- Legal risks for all parties, potentially costly and unfruitful litigation
- Negotiated management solution is in best interest of all water users
- Most goals offered by spring users on June 24th are reasonable and acceptable
- Goals can best be achieved via a Cooperative Management Plan

Key Elements of a Cooperative Management Plan

- State leadership and support
- Secure reliable water supply
- Managed recharge for aquifer storage
- Ground water user community maintains and supports water supply enhancement projects
- Cooperative efforts needed from all water users

Historical Activities of Ground Water Users

- Conversion of 9700 acres of land to surface water use
- Direct delivery of 10-12,000 af/yr to spring-dependent irrigators through Sandy pipe project
- Voluntary pumping reductions of 35,000 af/2002
- Provision of 54,000 af/2002-03 of rental water to canal companies
- Re-direction of canal spills to 5 re-regulation ponds for incidental recharge as aquifer storage
- Expenditures upwards of \$3.5 M on ground water activities

IGWA Idaho Ground Water Appropriators

State Leadership Role

- State-level water management authority
- Implementation of managed recharge program
- “Extension services” to support local management initiatives
- Legislature provides necessary authorizations

Water Management Authority

- Funded with user fees
- Guides and coordinates locally-based initiatives
- Clearinghouse for data, tools and information
- Enters into/facilitates necessary agreements and contracts
- Point of contact with federal interests and other entities
- Acquire and hold water rights

Extension Services to Water User Groups/Districts

- Help identify local scale water management needs and opportunities
- Grant/loan/cost-share programs to support local projects
- Coordinate planning and implementation of local projects
- Administer land set-aside/CRP/CREP program
- Assist with development of measurement and reporting systems for all water users

Needed Legislation

- Set up State water management authority for ESPA
- Establish funding mechanisms and ensure resources
- Remove impediments to managed recharge

Ground Water User Commitments

- Maintain existing measures and activities
- Acquire additional water supplies
- Seek additional opportunities for conversions and direct deliveries
- Work with surface water users to eliminate “return” spills to the river
- Evaluate set-aside, conversion or acquisition of target wells
- Pursue set-asides/dry-year leases/subordination agreements

Expectations of Other Water Users

- Participate in funding of State water management authority
- Implement measures to improve water collection, use and re-use
- Evaluate opportunities to use substitute supplies
- Assist in seeking necessary approvals from federal and other agencies
- Cooperate in making canal system improvements to enhance recharge
- Thorough and accurate monitoring/reporting of water supplies and uses
- Consider set-asides/dry-year leases/subordinations to reduce water needs

How Ground Water Users are Affected by Drought

- 2/3 to 3/4 of ground water users are forced to reduce pumping by:
 - throttling back pumps
 - leaving corners dry
 - idling fields
 - deepening wells
 - changing cropping rotation